Violation of Procedures in IPCL Distributorship

3971. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Petrochemical Corporation Ltd. (IPCL) offered distributorship for polymers, without following prescribed procedures during the last two years; and

(b) the action proposed to enquire into the matter through the Vigilance Commissioner or the CBI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Limited (IPCL) had issued an advertisement in January, 2001 for appointment of Consignment agents at different locations in the country. In view of the process of disinvestment of Government's equity in IPCL alongwith transfer of control of management and market dynamics, IPCL decided no to appoint any new Consignment agents. However, considering the competitive business environment and the requirements of the company, it was decided to allow the three existing chemical distributors with proven capacility, at Ahmedabad, Delhi and Mumbai to deal in Polymer products also initially for a period of one year subject to review. This decision was taken after following the appropriate procedure.

(b) Does not arise.

Product Patent Regime for Pharmaceuticals

3972. SHRI K.B. KRISHNAMURTHY: Will the Minister of CHEMICAL AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the lobby of Indian pharmaceutical industry has sought extension of WTO deadline to implement product patent regime in India;

(b) whether an option to extend the deadline was given at the Doha meet of the WTO to Least Developed Countries, whose health infrastructure and income could not bear the burden of expensive patented medicines; and

(c) whether India's per capita health spending in comparable with other Least Developed countries and if so, whether Government would consider extending the WTO deadline till 2016, to implement the provisions of the TRIPS agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Indian Pharmaceutical Industry has made various submissions to Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Department of Commerce, Department of Health and Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals relating to the patent regime.

(b) and (c) Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health in paragraph 7 provides that:

"...We also agree that the least-developed country Members will not be obliged, with respect to pharmaceutical products, to implement or apply sections 5 & 7 of Part II of the TRIPS Agreement or to enforce rights provided for under these Sections until 1st January, 2016, without prejudice to the right of the least-developed country members to seek other extensions of the transition period as provided for in article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement. We instruct the Council for TRIPS to take the necessary action to give effect to this pursuant to Article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement."

India does not qualify for inclusion in the least developed countries designated by the United Nations as per their criteria.

Surplus land with Nangal Fertilizers Ltd.

†3973. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Nangal Fertilizers Ltd., Nangal, District Hoshiyarpur, Punjab has still 2578 acres surplus land out of the land acquired in 1957-58, which should have been given back to the original owners thereof *i.e.* Farmers; and

(b) if so, the progress made in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) According to National Fertilizers Ltd., 2578 acres of land in their possession at Nangal, is not surplus as the same is predominantly used for plant, township and other activities.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.